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LETTER DATED 28 FEBRUARY 1992 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I.
OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS
ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter dated 28 February 1991 from Mr. Ahmad Hussein, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq, concerning the measures taken by Iraq in order to meet its obligations with regard to the implementation of paragraphs 30 and 31 of Security Council resolution 687 (1991).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Samir K. K. AL-NIMA
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex

Letter dated 28 February 1992 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you of the following:

1. Since the end of the Gulf war, Iraq has been meticulously following up the commitment incurred, in implementation of paragraphs 30 and 31 of Security Council resolution 687 (1991), to facilitate the repatriation of all those Kuwaiti nationals accepted by the Kuwaiti authorities and of all third-country nationals. Iraq has also extended all necessary cooperation to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) by providing lists of such persons, facilitating the access of ICRC to all such persons wherever located and allowing ICRC to make the visits that it has requested to places of detention and imprisonment.

2. In cooperation with the ICRC delegation in Baghdad, the competent Iraqi authorities have returned to Kuwait 6,520 Kuwaitis or persons of other nationalities, both soldiers and civilians, since 4 March 1991. There are also at present 3,594 Kuwaitis in Iraq who are not detainees but who are at liberty, are living a normal life and may move about among all of Iraq's governorates. They were given the opportunity to register with ICRC in Baghdad and to submit applications in order to return to Kuwait of their own free will and without interference on the part of the Iraqi authorities. At the outset, the ICRC delegation approached the Kuwaiti authorities with a view to seeking agreement to their repatriation. However, clearances were obtained from the competent Kuwaiti authorities for the return of only 468 of all such Kuwaitis, and we still await their agreement to the repatriation of the remainder so that we can immediately effect the repatriation under the supervision of ICRC.

3. By its note No. 5951 of 15 September 1991, the ICRC delegation forwarded to the competent Iraqi authorities a list sent by the Kuwaiti authorities containing the names of 2,242 persons that they believed to be in Iraq. The competent Iraqi authorities proceeded to take the necessary measures to verify the list on the basis of the information available to them, and it was concluded that 233 of the persons on the list had already been repatriated to Kuwait under the supervision of ICRC and that there were 59 Kuwaitis on the same list who were still in Iraq awaiting approval from the Kuwaiti authorities for their repatriation. The competent Iraqi authorities have no information on the other names contained in the Kuwaiti list.

4. For the purpose of making the inter-Arab and international community directly aware of the developments that had taken place in the matter, the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States was requested to send a team to Iraq in order to investigate and ascertain the situation of the Kuwaitis on the spot. We gave assurances that Iraq would cooperate with the team and that it would provide all necessary facilities for it to acquaint itself with the

facts as they really were. At the request of Iraq and on the basis of the discussions that took place during the ninety-sixth session of the Council of the League, held at Cairo from 10 to 12 September 1991, the Secretary-General of the League appointed as his representative Mr. Abd Allah Adam, an Assistant Secretary-General of the League and a national of Somalia, to be accompanied by Mr. Mukhtar al-Yamani, a national of Morocco, to undertake a visit to Iraq and to investigate and ascertain the situation of the Kuwaitis and the manner in which they were living.

The delegation arrived at Baghdad on 27 September 1991 and pursued its mission until 14 October 1991. During that time, it met the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and held lengthy meetings with officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It also held frequent meetings with the ICRC delegation in Baghdad. The delegation made on-site visits to those of Iraq's governorates where Kuwaitis were located, established direct contact with them and became acquainted with the kind of conditions in which they were living. On completion of his mission, Mr. Abd Allah Adam expressed immense satisfaction at the great interest shown in the delegation and at the availability of all the facilities requested, which had contributed to the success of the delegation's mission. The two sides agreed that the mission should be open-ended, in the event that additional information should become available in the future. Following his return to Cairo, Mr. Abd Allah Adam reached agreement with the Secretary-General of the League that there should be no public announcement of the results of his visit to Iraq and that they should simply be communicated to the representative of Kuwait to the League. Consequently, on 18 December 1991, Iraq instructed its Permanent Representative to the League to request the Secretary-General to communicate the results and assessment of the visit to Baghdad of his representative, Ambassador Abd Allah Adam, to the States members of the League so that they might be informed of the true state of affairs.

5. On 16 and 17 October 1991, meetings were held in Geneva between an Iraqi delegation and delegations from the coalition States under the auspices of ICRC. These meetings produced a protocol prepared by ICRC and signed by the parties participating in the meetings. The protocol pressed on Iraq a number of requests in connection with the implementation of paragraphs 30 and 31 of Security Council resolution 687 (1991). Iraq dealt with the protocol in a positive manner, inasmuch as it informed ICRC, by Ministry of Foreign Affairs note No. 7/4/1/13/66592 of 11 November 1991, of its agreement to the following:

(a) That the names of missing Kuwaitis and Saudis, in accordance with the lists provided by Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, would be printed and disseminated in one Iraqi newspaper for the purpose of tracing them and seeking information on their fate;

(b) That lists of places of detention and prisons would be provided to the ICRC delegation so that it could visit each of them once only;

(c) That the visits to detention centres and prisons for the purpose of tracing missing Kuwaitis and Saudis would be coordinated with the competent Iraqi agencies and with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs;

(d) The Iraqi side requested that the principle of reciprocity should be observed by establishing that the above procedures would also be followed in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait in the search for missing Iraqis.

6. On 18 December 1991, the ICRC delegate communicated to the Iraqi side the reply of the coalition States to the note of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iraq indicated in paragraph 5 above. It was to the following effect:

That the publication of the names of missing Kuwaitis and others in one local newspaper was insufficient, and that the announcement should be published again in a number of newspapers;

That the parties to the coalition did not agree that visits should be limited to once only to each location;

That they did not accept the principle of reciprocity in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

7. After considering the reply of the coalition States mentioned in paragraph 6 above, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iraq addressed to ICRC its note No. 7/4/1/13/66671 of 17 December. Paragraph 2 of the note stated as follows:

"2. As a solution, Iraq proposes that ICRC should be entrusted with the preparation of an overall plan of coordination, to be agreed upon between Iraq and the other parties, concerning methods and procedures for tracing missing Kuwaitis, Saudis, Iraqis and others on the basis of the provisions of the 1949 Geneva Conventions."

As of the date of writing, ICRC has not responded to Iraq's proposal.

8. Iraq is closely observing the dubious attempts being made by those States that are exploiting this matter in a misleading manner in order to wage media campaigns aimed at deluding Arab and international public opinion into believing that Iraq is detaining large numbers of Kuwaitis and is refusing to repatriate them. These campaigns are also aimed at perpetuating the harm done to Iraq and its long-suffering Arab people by maintaining the embargo and the unjust economic boycott imposed on it. In order to reveal the truth and expose the inhuman goals of the States that are waging such deceptive media campaigns, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iraq addressed to the ICRC delegation in Baghdad its note No. 7/4/1/13/66109 of 20 February 1992, in which it stated the following:

Firstly: That the competent Iraqi authorities were prepared to take the necessary measures to publish the names of missing Kuwaitis, Saudis and others in the Iraqi newspapers;

Secondly: That they were prepared to arrange visits for representatives of ICRC to prisons and places of detention so that they could investigate and seek the missing persons in accordance with the customary rules and the Geneva Conventions;

Thirdly: That they were prepared to reach agreement on the details relating to publication and to visits with the head of the ICRC delegation in Baghdad.

Iraq, having on 20 February 1992 communicated its position to ICRC, has met its obligations as stipulated in paragraphs 30 and 31 of Security Council resolution 687 (1991). It requests you, the Secretariat and the Security Council to accord the necessary attention to Iraq's positive attitude on this matter, one by virtue of which the pretexts used by certain parties on the international scene in order to maintain the economic embargo against Iraq stand confounded.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Ahmad HUSSEIN
Minister for Foreign Affairs

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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE UNITED NATIONS MISSION FOR THE REFERENDUM IN WESTERN SAHARA

INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted in pursuance of Security Council resolution 725 (1991) of 31 December 1991. By paragraph 4 of that resolution, the Security Council invited the Secretary-General to submit a further report on the situation concerning Western Sahara as soon as possible but in any event within two months of the date of adoption of the resolution.

2. The report is divided into three sections. Section I relates to the military aspects of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). Section II covers all other aspects of the operation, including developments since the last report to the Council on 19 December 1991. 1/ Section III contains my conclusions and recommendations.

I. MILITARY ASPECTS

3. As of mid-February 1992, the military strength of MINURSO was 375, including 200 United Nations Military Observers.

(a) United Nations military observers and headquarters personnel:

Argentina	7
Australia	2
Austria	1
Bangladesh	1
Canada	16
China	20
Egypt	9
France	30
Ghana	1

	Greece	1
	Guinea	1
	Ireland	6
	Italy	6
	Kenya	10
	Malaysia	1
	Nigeria	1
	Pakistan	1
	Peru	15
	Poland	2
	Switzerland	1
	Tunisia	9
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	15
	United States of America	30
	Russian Federation	29
	Venezuela	15
	Subtotal	230
(b)	Signals unit: Australia	43
(c)	Medical unit: Switzerland	85
(d)	Movement control: Canada	17
	Total	375

4. The Force headquarters is collocated with MINURSO headquarters in Laayoune. In accordance with my predecessor's letter of 3 September 1991 to the President of the Security Council, 2/ United Nations military observers have been deployed to 10 team sites at Mahbes, Smara, Tifariti, Bir Lahlou and Meharrize in the northern sector; Oum Dreyga and Mijek in the central sector; and Awsard, Zug and Aguenit in the southern sector. The team site at Zug was relocated to nearby Dougaj in November 1991 to facilitate both logistic supply and liaison with the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el-Hamra y de Río de Oro (POLISARIO) and to provide better accommodation for the United Nations military observers. Sector headquarters have been provisionally established at Smara, Oum Dreyga and Awsard. A liaison office has been established at Tindouf in Algeria to maintain contact with the Algerian authorities and POLISARIO.

5. The Australian Signals Unit has detachments at Force headquarters, at each sector headquarters and at the Tindouf liaison office. The Swiss Medical Unit is based in Laayoune but has small medical clinics in Smara and Dakhla, as well as air medical and casualty evacuation elements in Laayoune and Smara.

6. In his letter of 3 September 1991 to the President of the Security Council, 2/ my predecessor reported his intention to deploy initially 100 observers and some support personnel to verify the cease-fire and cessation of hostilities. This was endorsed by the Security Council on 4 September 1991. 3/ The first group of United Nations military personnel arrived in Laayoune on 5 September, just hours before the cease-fire came into formal effect at 0600 Greenwich mean time (GMT) on 6 September 1991. On that date, military observers started their deployment forward toward the team sites and the Tindouf liaison office was opened. As personnel and equipment were received, they were dispatched forward to ensure an effective United Nations presence as rapidly as possible in the areas referred to above. By 11 September an air corridor between Laayoune and Tindouf had been established and by 15 September all 10 team sites were occupied. My predecessor's decision to deploy 100 additional observers and a few more support personnel was communicated by letter to the President of the Security Council on 13 September 1991. 4/ This second deployment occurred in the third week in September after endorsement by the Security Council on 17 September 1991. 5/

7. The team site is the key element in monitoring the cease-fire and each one is, on average, responsible for an area of more than 9,000 square kilometres on either side of the sandwall or berm, which extends for 1,960 kilometres. United Nations military observers operate in mobile patrols of two vehicles each, with two United Nations military observers per vehicle. Patrols can last from several hours to several days, depending on the mission and the distances involved. Helicopter-borne patrols are also conducted on both sides of the berm and enhance the United Nations capability to cover the large area and react at short notice to complaints and violations. The primary task of these patrols is to monitor compliance with the cease-fire. They do this by direct observation of military forces and activities carried out by either party and by verifying complaints of alleged cease-fire violations. Each violation or complaint is taken up with the relevant military commanders, both orally and in writing, and is reported up the MINURSO chain of command. Each confirmed violation is the object of a protest to the party concerned. Each complaint is investigated, and the results are communicated to the complaining party as quickly as possible. In all instances the confidentiality of information obtained from either side is protected.

8. Pursuant to paragraph 14 of my predecessor's report of 19 December 1991, 1/ I addressed a letter dated 14 January 1992 to each party clarifying those acts which, in accordance with normal United Nations practice, are considered to be violations of the cease-fire. To date, I have received from one of the parties a letter dated 16 January 1992 in which that party undertakes to abide by the provisions of my letter. There has been no response from the other party, which continues to be responsible for the majority of the violations.

9. The main types of cease-fire violations that have occurred include overflights, improvement of defensive works and movement of troops. In addition, the freedom of movement of United Nations military observers has been impeded on various occasions. A total of 77 violations has been reported, 75 of which have been attributed to Morocco and 2 to POLISARIO. Overflights have been particularly difficult to corroborate, given the limited resources available to the United Nations military observers for positive identification of aircraft. However, on some occasions it has been possible to confirm that military aircraft were involved. Defensive improvements have included the laying of minefields, digging of anti-tank ditches, construction of rock and/or sand walls and building of other fortifications such as bunkers or barriers. Finally, there have been some unauthorized movements of troops by both parties from the positions held on 6 September 1991.

10. Before the deployment of the United Nations military observers, each of the two parties was requested to provide a detailed description of the strength and location of its military forces. One party promptly provided this information, while the other has continued to maintain that it will be provided only when D-day has been determined in accordance with the settlement plan and MINURSO begins its full deployment in the Territory.

11. Agreed points at which the United Nations military observers can cross the berm help them to deal expeditiously with alleged violations. Such crossing-points already exist in each of the three sectors. It is hoped that the Moroccan military authorities will shortly agree to a request for additional crossing-points, which would greatly enhance MINURSO's monitoring capability.

12. Mines are the single most significant hazard to MINURSO personnel. To date, there have been three potentially life-threatening incidents involving United Nations military observers; in the most serious, on 25 January 1992, a MINURSO vehicle was destroyed by an anti-tank mine, thankfully with only minor injuries to one of the occupants. The mine threat highlights the importance of having well trained military personnel to execute operational and logistic tasks, obtaining accurate information on minefield locations from both parties and maintaining an efficient, 24-hour/7-day capability for communications and medical evacuation and treatment.

13. The Swiss Medical Unit, whose equipment includes three fixed-wing aircraft, provides that capability, working closely with the Australian Signals Unit. It also provides a full range of medical, surgical and dental services and undertakes weekly visits to all team sites in order to provide preventive medicine and hygiene services. Now that the clinics at Laayoune, Smara and Dakhla have been established, the Unit's strength will be reduced to 65. It is to be noted that an important part of the Unit is provided as a generous voluntary contribution by Switzerland.

14. The primary function of MINURSO in its present limited deployment is to monitor the cease-fire. I am glad to report that the cease-fire has held during the last five and a half months. There have been no exchanges of fire

between the two sides and no deaths as a direct result of hostile action, although both parties have suffered casualties from mines. There have, however, been a worrying number of lesser violations of the cease-fire and these have sometimes led to tension. The great majority of these violations have been attributable to one of the parties. I appeal to this party to do everything possible to ensure that the cease-fire is fully observed in all respects.

15. The United Nations military observers have now had time to familiarize themselves with the terrain and, to varying degrees, with the forces of the two sides. The Force Commander has advised me that he is confident that he would be able to detect in advance any preparations by either side for a major attack. It is of course of great importance that MINURSO should have this early-warning capability. But this depends on its being in possession of authoritative information about the strength and deployment of the two sides' forces. It is of equal importance that there should be no hindrance to the United Nations military observers' freedom of movement.

16. The logistic support of MINURSO personnel deployed in the desert has been a matter of major concern. Most of the United Nations military observers are living in harsh conditions in a vast desert where extremes of temperature prevail. There have been serious difficulties in providing them with satisfactory accommodation as well as food, water and fuel.

17. Under the plan approved by the Security Council, the United Nations military observers deployed in the desert would have formed part of a much larger deployment, including substantial military logistic elements whose tasks would have included support of the United Nations military observers. When the present limited and partial deployment of MINURSO was agreed upon in August 1991, my predecessor decided that stop-gap arrangements should be made for the logistic support of the United Nations military observers until the future of the main MINURSO operation became clearer. Morocco was accordingly asked to make vehicles, radios and other equipment available to enable the United Nations military observers to begin their work, pending the release from Moroccan ports of United Nations equipment shipped to the area. Both parties were asked, on a similarly temporary basis, to meet the United Nations military observers' requirements in terms of accommodation, food, water and fuel.

18. Because of continuing uncertainty about the full implementation of the settlement plan as well as unforeseen logistic problems and local administrative difficulties relating to the release of United Nations equipment, these stop-gap arrangements have continued for longer than originally intended. However, steps are now being taken to erect modern prefabricated camps in order to provide adequate accommodation for the United Nations military observers. United Nations-controlled arrangements are also being made to supply them with food, fuel and water.

19. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the two parties for the assistance they have given to the United Nations military observers in the

field and for the cooperation which they have extended to MINURSO. As has been explained above, there are certain respects in which MINURSO needs further cooperation from the parties if it is to be able to carry out the task entrusted to it by the Security Council. I renew my appeal that such cooperation should now be provided in full, along the lines indicated above.

20. I wish to pay tribute to the personnel of MINURSO for the contribution they have made to the maintenance of the cease-fire in Western Sahara. Their living conditions have in many cases been harsh and have tested to the limit their discipline and their commitment to the cause of peace in the service of the United Nations. Their performance brings great credit to them and to their countries.

II. OTHER ASPECTS

21. Since I assumed office, I have followed closely the question of Western Sahara and the role of MINURSO. On 30 January 1992 I had discussions with the King of Morocco and on 14 February 1992 with the Secretary-General of the Frente POLISARIO who had been invited, for the first time, to United Nations Headquarters. I have also been in contact with the Government of Algeria and with the Organization of African Unity (OAU). While both parties have reiterated to me their confidence in the United Nations, their commitment to the settlement plan and their willingness to restore the momentum of the peace process, it is very clear that they have divergent views and different interpretations of some of the key elements contained in the plan.

22. Fundamental differences persist between the parties regarding the question of criteria for eligibility to vote in the referendum. Lack of progress in this critical area is a matter of serious concern and has precluded the establishment of a realistic revised timetable for the organization and conduct of the referendum. The absence of dialogue between my representatives and one of the parties on substantive issues relating to the identification process has also been a severe handicap, as has been the same party's opposition to the instructions for the Identification Commission annexed to my predecessor's report of 19 December 1991. 1/ It is obvious that, unless priority is given in the coming weeks to resolving this outstanding issue, it will continue to be extremely difficult to make meaningful progress in the implementation of the plan.

23. Notwithstanding these difficulties, progress has been achieved in recent weeks in the accomplishment of a number of technical tasks required in pursuance of paragraph 2 of Security Council resolution 725 (1991) and paragraph 13 of document S/23299. After the resignation of the previous Special Representative, I instructed the Deputy Special Representative to proceed to the area, principally to address the persistent logistical and technical problems faced by MINURSO. In order to reduce costs to a minimum, a thorough review of its human and material resources was undertaken. The Office of the Special Representative in New York was closed at the beginning of January 1992 and MINURSO staff at Headquarters were either redeployed to

their respective services or released upon termination of their contracts with MINURSO. Part of the United Nations equipment that had been sent to the area in August 1991 on the assumption that full deployment of MINURSO would take place as foreseen in the plan was diverted to other United Nations operations where it was urgently required. At the same time, agreement was reached on the release and transport from Moroccan ports of all United Nations goods required by MINURSO and notably by its military component.

24. Progress has been made in particular in establishing the legal framework for the organization and conduct of the referendum. The mandates of the Identification Commission and the Referendum Commission have been prepared in accordance with the general rules for the organization and conduct of the referendum in Western Sahara promulgated by my predecessor on 8 November 1991. A preliminary review of Moroccan laws and regulations that could affect the referendum process has also been undertaken in recent weeks.

25. In paragraph 9 of my predecessor's report of 19 December 1991, 1/ it was indicated that the first stage of the identification process, consisting of the preparation by the United Nations of a revised list of the 1974 census, had been completed, but that it had not proved possible to reach agreement on publication of that list in the Territory. Although the revised list has still not been published, both sides say that they have communicated it, through their respective local channels, to the Western Saharans concerned. Because of the lack of agreement on eligibility criteria, however, instructions on how to apply for inclusion in the list have not been published as required by paragraph 21 of my predecessor's report of 19 April 1991. 6/ This makes it impossible to take the further steps foreseen in the plan for the establishment of the consolidated list. It is thus clear that, if an understanding is not reached on the eligibility criteria and on other aspects of the process, including the selection and role of the tribal chiefs and observers, implementation of the existing settlement plan will remain blocked.

26. Meanwhile, localities in the Territory for the deployment of personnel for the Identification Commission, and eventually the Referendum Commission, have been identified and discussions initiated at the local level for the provision of facilities to MINURSO. A computerized system has been developed for the provision of support services based on electronic data-processing for voter registration and the referendum process.

27. Consultations have been held with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Geneva. UNHCR now has adequate contributions in cash and kind to organize, as provided in the plan, the eventual return of refugees together with their immediate families. Preparatory technical measures have been taken by UNHCR. A senior-level UNHCR mission to the Territory is foreseen in the near future.

28. A review of the administrative and budgetary structure of MINURSO has also been undertaken. In view of the current needs, pending the resolution of outstanding issues relating to the identification process, further streamlining of MINURSO's overall structure is under way to achieve maximum

economy. In this context, a number of senior-level posts will not be filled and others that are currently filled will be vacated in the immediate future. A limited number of civilian personnel will, however, be required to assist in resolving outstanding issues. This work will need to be carried out both at Headquarters and in the field.

29. The remaining technical problems have clear political overtones. During recent weeks I have been endeavouring to obtain the two parties' agreement to the appointment of a new Special Representative, whose first task would be to bring about a speedy and effective resolution of those problems. I have consulted the parties about a number of personalities but it has not so far proved possible to identify one who would be acceptable to both of them. I shall continue my efforts in the coming days. The complex task awaiting the new Special Representative cannot, of course, be completed without the full understanding and support of both parties.

III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

30. As is well known, the referendum in Western Sahara should have taken place in January 1992. However, it has not been possible to proceed in conformity with the original timetable, in view of continuing problems and persistent differences of interpretation with regard to the implementation of the plan. I am not therefore in a position at this time to propose a revised timetable for implementation. However, I believe that a target date should now be set for resolution of all outstanding issues that block implementation of the plan. In my view, three months would be a reasonable period to set for this task. I would accordingly propose to report further to the Security Council not later than the end of May 1992. If by that date it has not been possible to reach agreement on implementation of the existing plan, it will be necessary to consider alternative courses of action and possibly adopt a new approach to the whole problem.

31. Meanwhile, I recommend that the current level of MINURSO activity be maintained for the above-mentioned period. The mandate of the military elements of MINURSO will continue to be restricted to verifying the cease-fire and cessation of hostilities in the areas defined in September 1991. 2/, 3/ I am convinced that the continued presence of MINURSO in these areas helps to maintain the cease-fire and thus create conditions for the remaining obstacles to be removed. I trust that the parties will continue to refrain from any action that might hinder efforts to bring about a mutually acceptable solution to this complex problem.

32. The difficulties that have arisen with the two parties regarding the interpretation of some essential elements of the settlement plan have had an adverse effect on its implementation. This, together with the fact that the United Nations has never before organized a referendum of this kind, explains in large measure the delay that has occurred. However, acceptance of this delay should not be perceived as indicating an open-ended commitment on the part of the international community. The full cooperation of the two parties

is essential if the United Nations is to play a meaningful role in facilitating a just and lasting solution of the problem.

33. At this critical juncture, it is important to recall that, in accepting the settlement proposals and entrusting the United Nations with the exclusive responsibility for all matters relating to the organization and conduct of the Western Saharan referendum, the parties recognized, and placed their full trust in, the integrity and impartiality of the United Nations in the settlement process. In this spirit, I appeal to the parties to engage in every effort to cooperate with the United Nations and enable it to play a full role in the search for mutually acceptable solutions. It is my earnest hope that the appointment of a new Special Representative will provide fresh impetus and move the process forward.

34. I hope that I can count on the same support and understanding which the members of the Security Council afforded my predecessor in his efforts to bring about a just and definitive solution to the Western Sahara problem. For my part, I pledge my commitment to explore every possible avenue for the achievement of that objective.

Notes

1/ S/23299.

2/ S/23008.

3/ S/23009.

4/ S/23043.

5/ S/23044.

6/ S/22464.